

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 07244 022146Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 NSC-05 SS-15 IO-13 AGRE-00
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /060 W
-----037229 022154Z /66
P 022100Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8544

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STATE/AID MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, JM
SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL TERRACING IN JAMAICA

REFERENCE: SURBER (ARA/CAR) - AMBASSADOR IRVING TELECON THIS SUBJECT

1. THE FOLLOWING MAY BE HELPFUL IN PREPARATION OF BRIEFING
ON AGRICULTURAL BENCH TERRACING WHICH PRIME MINISTER MANLEY
INTENDS TO RAISE DURING THE BILATERAL WITH PRESIDENT CARTER
ON DECEMBER 16.

2. TERRACING, SIMPLY AND BRIEFLY STATED, IS A METHOD OF
CONSERVING THE SOIL ON SLOPES SO AS TO MAKE THE HILLS
PRODUCTIVE. TERRACING CAN TAKE MANY FORMS, DEPENDING ON
THE SOIL CONDITION AND DEGREE OF SLOPE, SUCH AS HILLSIDE
DITCHES, HORIZONTAL LEVEL AREAS LIKE STEPS OR BENCHES,
PLANTING OF TREES TO HOLD THE SOIL, ETC. THE ONE THING ALL
THE METHODS HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT PREPARATION OF THE SLOPES
IS OR CAN BE LABOR INTENSIVE, NOT REQUIRING SKILLED LABOR.
THE PRIME MINISTER'S INTEREST IN BENCH TERRACING IS
THAT IT WILL BOTH INCREASE THE LAND AVAILABLE FOR FOOD
PRODUCTION (HE ESTIMATES THAT IT WILL MORE THAN DOUBLE
PRESENT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY) AND PROVIDE
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PAGE 02 KINGST 07244 022146Z

IMMEDIATE RELIEF TO AN UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION, PARTICULARLY
AMONG THE YOUNG PEOPLE, WHICH HAS REACHED A SERIOUS
SOCIAL AND POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF AROUND 30 PERCENT.

3. DRAWING UPON SEVERAL YEARS OF SOIL CONSERVATION RE-
SEARCH IN JAMAICA SUPPORTED BY THE UNDP AND FAO, AID'S

PROJECT REPRESENTS AN EXTENSIVE PILOT EFFORT IN TWO WATERSHEDS WITH SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL BUT WHICH HAVE SERIOUS EROSION PROBLEMS. BY PROJECT END (1982), THE FOLLOWING MAJOR RESULTS ARE CONTEMPLATED: 24,000 TREATED ACRES; 750 NEW JOBS PER YEAR EMPLOYING UNSKILLED LABOR; INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY, FOOD PRODUCTION AND INCOME FOR SMALL FARMERS; INCREASED FOREST ACREAGE; AND, THE TRAINING OF TECHNICIANS NEEDED TO LAY THE BASIS FOR EXTENDING THIS KIND OF PROGRAM TO JAMAICA'S REMAINING 31 WATERSHEDS, 8 OF WHICH ARE IN CRITICAL CONDITION. THE FOCAL POINT OF THE AID PROJECT IS TERRACING, COUPLED WITH REFORESTATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE SOIL EROSION, REDUCE RAPID WATER RUNOFF, INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY OF HILLSIDE FARMING, AND RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE LOW INCOME FARMER WITH LIMITED ACREAGE. THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT IS \$26.2 MILLION OF WHICH OVER \$20 MILLION ARE DEVOTED TO LAND IMPROVEMENT AND RELATED PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES. AID'S CONTRIBUTION IS \$15 MILLION.

4. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, THE PRIME MINISTER IS HOPING TO ARRANGE MULTI-SOURCE FINANCING (WHICH HE DESCRIBES AS A CONSORTIUM) INCLUDING FAO AND AID FOR HIS PROPOSED MAJOR TERRACING PROGRAM. IF AID DOES PARTICIPATE, SAY IN FY79, FUNDS WOULD HAVE TO BE DRAWN FROM THE RESOURCES BEING CONSIDERED FOR A SPECIAL PROJECTS CARIBBEAN INITIATIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KINGST 07244 022146Z

(SEE STATE 277900) OR FROM AN EXPANDED BILATERAL PROGRAM. IF MORE THAN ONE DONOR IS INVOLVED, THE EXPANDED TERRACING PROGRAM COULD BE SUPPORTED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE CARIBBEAN GROUP FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION. IRVING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KINGST07244
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770448-0375
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712101/aaaadhmo.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0ad8cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 105680
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AGRICULTURAL TERRACING IN JAMAICA
TAGS: EAID, EAGR, JM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0ad8cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009